

UNIFIED ARIZONA VETERANS (UAV), P.O. BOX 34338, PHOENIX, AZ 85067

**MINUTES OF THE UAV GENERAL MEETING HELD ON MAY 7, 2011
AT THE STATE VETERAN HOME, 4141 N. SILVESTRE HERRERA WAY,
PHOENIX, AZ 85012**

CALL TO ORDER: 10 a.m. by Chairman Bob Delker, followed by Invocation by Chaplain Bo Bohach, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. "Highway 51 and the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona (NMCA)": Claude Mattox, Phoenix City Council, District 5. Councilman Mattox gave a summary of the City of Phoenix's support of veterans: The City honors its employees who deploy with a pay differential as necessary; there is the work of the Phoenix Veterans Commission; the Phoenix Veterans Lounge at Terminal 2, Sky Harbor Airport, became USO Phoenix; and the City has a resting place for the USS PHOENIX nuclear submarine mast and rudder at Steele Indian School Park. Councilman Mattox discussed that the City will be trading the easement in the middle of the NMCA in return for land on the east side of the NMCA.

2. "Arizona Coalition for Military Families/Arizona Military/Veteran Employment Initiative" : Nicola Winkel and Corey Harris. Ms. Winkel and Corey Harris presented that the AZ Coalition for Military Families/Arizona Military/Veteran Employment Initiative is focused on building Arizona's capacity to serve and support all service members, veterans, their families and their communities. Veteran unemployment is 20% which is 3 times the national unemployment average. The Employment Portal is up and running: www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment
There is an Employment Resource Center, the address is: Employment Resource Center, Arizona National Guard, Personnel Readiness Center, 1335 N. 52nd Street, Phoenix 85008, telephone 602.267.2534.

3. "NABVETS Concern regarding Certification of Disability for Property Tax Exemption": Jacque Jackson, State Commander, NABVETS, reported a difficulty she is experiencing -- the Certificate of Disability for Property Tax Exemption form requires a doctor's signature, however, several doctors refuse to sign the Form. Senate Resolution 1031 did not pass the last Legislature. Ms. Jackson asked other VSOs who are having the same difficulty to contact her and share their information. Ms. Jackson consulted the UAV Legislative Committee today at its meeting and received some helpful information.

ROLL CALL: **Quorum** established for conducting business.

MINUTES of the April 2nd meeting. Motion to approve the Minutes by Lew Bradley, seconded by Bernie Kaplan. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT as of April 30, 2011 was presented by Treasurer Jesse Gersten. The report is on file with the Secretary.

SICKNESS AND DISTRESS: Chaplain Bo Bohach reported the passing of Jerry Houston, AVHOF Class of 2009.

REPORTS:

1. VA Regional Office: Jeff McAdams, VA Regional Office, reported the sad state of VA claims backlog: 80,000 claims across the nation. Six months' processing is about average. There are 12 claim stations, and Phoenix is one of them. 58% are Nehmer claims, 42% - the rest. **See Addendum #1** at the end of the Minutes regarding Nehmer claims.

2. VA Medical Center Phoenix: Sarah Nelson, Lead Patient Advocate, reported that since April 1st, the use of appointment cards is improving customer service. There are two staff members available each day to handle 90-100 calls per day.

3. National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona (NMCA) – Wayne Ellis reported that the Marker project (replacement, raising and realigning of markers) is now completed. The Columbarium project (5000 niches) is also completed. The May 30th Memorial Day Ceremonies start promptly at 8:00 a.m. at the NMCA.

4. Arizona Dept of Veterans' Services - Director Joey Strickland reported the following: Appeals are the largest stack in the VA's backlog. The VA Board of Appeals has 3 vacant seats which impact the Board's effectiveness. The State Veterans Home Phoenix's renovation is completed; a million dollars were spent. Major League Baseball has adopted the State Veterans Home in Phoenix, giving \$200,000 to upgrade the outside patio, etc. In October 2011, 85 veterans will move into the new State Veteran Home in Tucson. Director Strickland is working with the AZ National Guard to obtain 80 acres at Camp Navajo for a cemetery for the Flagstaff area. The State will contribute 10% (\$3 million dollars); the Fed Govt will contribute \$5 million. It takes about 5 ½ million to 7 million to start a cemetery. Other sites being worked: Oro Valley, 5 acres near Marana for the Tucson area; Yuma – 30 acre cemetery; Kingman area – the Mayor's Office has been contacted. The AZ Military Family Relief Fund has helped 100 families (\$500,000 of financial assistance). 326 Arizona women veterans registered for the April 30 & May 1st Third Annual Arizona Military Women's Conference. The Freedom License Plate for \$25 is now available to all Arizonans, \$17 goes to the Veterans Donation /Fund. There is also a Woman Veteran License Plate. Fred Irwin (Training) and Kathy Pearce are now on the AZDVS Staff.

AZDVS Legislative report: Dave Hampton reported that the State Legislature enacted 57 bills, 14 of which were veteran-related. HB 2410, In-State Tuition, was very important. Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF) financial assistance was approved up to the \$20,000 level. Effective July 20, 2011: **SB 1283 - child custody; military families.** **See Addendum #2** at the end of these Minutes regarding SB 1283 - child custody; military families.

4. UAV Board of Directors – Chairman Delker reminded the members that Nominations of legislators for the 2012 Copper Shield Award are due to Linda Fulkerson, UAV Legislative Chair. The due date is: August 30th. Contact Linda Fulkerson (fulkers6@q.com) to obtain the mailing address for submitting your Copper Shield Nomination. The Copper Shield Ceremony hosted by the UAV honors a member of the State Legislature who supports veterans and their families. Be sure to calendar Friday, February 10, 2012 for the 2012 Copper Sword/Copper Shield Ceremony and Dinner event. Location of the Copper Sword/Copper Shield event to be announced. Chairman Delker's intent is to keep the dinner cost at \$35 per person.

5. UAV Legislative Committee – Linda Fulkerson stated that Unified Arizona Veterans needs to be more pro-active in the legislative area. She invited all members to participate in the UAV Legislative Committee meetings which are held at 9 a.m., one hour before the regular 10 a.m. UAV meetings. Look for the UAV Legislative Committee meeting on the second floor of the State Veterans Home adjacent to Liberty Hall.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Request to join the UAV – Chairman Delker reported that the City of Tucson Veterans' Affairs Committee has submitted a request to join the UAV. The UAV Board of Directors recommends approval to the body. Motion carried.

2. Wed., December 7, 2011: Lew Bradley and his Committee, working with the AZDVS again this year, announced that Marshall Trimble will be the Keynote Speaker at the December 7, 2011 Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration Ceremonies at Wesley Bolin Plaza. Bob Barnes, Deputy Director, AZDVS, will be the Emcee. Contact Lew Bradley if you are interested in serving on the Planning Committee (lew.bradley@gmail.com).

The Commemorative Air Force is willing to do a flyover if five passengers purchase tickets to fly in the plane (\$395 per person, \$650 per person to sit in the jump seat).

GOOD OF THE ORDER ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Gary Fredricks reported on the "Storming of the Hill" conducted by members of the MOAA/Military Officers Association of America in Washington, D.C. on April 13. See Addendum #3 at the end of these Minutes regarding Storming of the Hill.

2. School supplies needed for Afghan Children: Art Sloane reminded everyone that LCDR Ryan Burke, USN, currently deployed to Iraq, is seeking school supplies for Iraqi children. Linda Fulkerson is collecting the school supplies; feel free to contact Linda at: fulkers6@q.com to add your school supplies to what she is collecting.

3. Jeanne Boatwright reminded everyone that Mary Ellen's Place, affordable apartments for women veterans, is being dedicated at 10 a.m. On Saturday, May 14, 224 E. Hatcher Road, north Phoenix 85020.

4. Naval Order History Society: Carol Culbertson invited everyone to the free Tuesday, May 24 Battle of Midway program presented by retired attorney George Mitchell. Doors open at 11:15 am at Macayo's Mexican Kitchen Restaurant, 4001 N. Central Ave., Phoenix 85012.

5. 11th Annual Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Luncheon, 10:30 a.m., Friday, Oct 28, 2011, El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium, 552 N. 40th St., Phoenix, AZ 85008. The public is invited.

6. Nov 11, 12 & 13 – Vietnam Traveling Wall at Tempe Beach Park (David Lucier).

7. 50/50 Raffle winner: Jim Katzenberger won \$43.00, with \$43.00 to the treasury.

CLOSING AND ADJOURNMENT

1. Next Meeting: Saturday, June 4th, State Veteran Home, 10 am to Noon.

2. Closing prayer was given by Chaplain Bohach.

3. Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

CAROL CULBERTSON

Secretary, Unified Arizona Veterans

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ADDENDUM #1 – Background on Nehmer claims

On October 13, 2009, Secretary of the VA Eric Shinseki announced his intent to establish presumptive service connection for Ischemic Heart Disease, Parkinson's disease, and Hairy Cell Leukemia for veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam. This decision was based on the Institute of Medicine's seventh biennial update, *"Veterans and Agent Orange: Committee to Review the Health Effects in Vietnam Veterans and Exposure to Herbicides."* Under the court order of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California (the "Court") in *Nehmer v. U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs*, 712 F. Supp. 1404, 1409 (N.D. Cal. 1989), VA must readjudicate previously denied claims for IHD, PD, or HCL filed by *Nehmer* class members (Vietnam Veterans and their survivors) and provide retroactive benefits pursuant to 38 C.F.R. § 3.816. This requirement involves

claims filed or denied from September 25, 1985, to the effective date of VA's final regulation establishing a presumption of service connection for the disease claimed. Such claims may not be finally adjudicated until VA's regulation change at 38.C.F.R. §3.309(e) is final, which will add these three diseases to the list of diseases associated with herbicide exposure.

ADDENDUM #2 – SB 1283: Child custody, Military Families

Would protect child custody rights of a military person being deployed and preventing a court from issuing a child custody order until 90 days after deployment of the military parent ends.

Original Sponsor:

Sen. K. Sinema, D-Dist 15, Sen. Sylvia Allen, R-Dist 5, et al

Latest Major Action: 27 Jan 2011-First Read, assigned to the Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee and Rules Committee. 8 Feb 2011-Given a "Do Pass" recommendation in Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee, 7-0. 14 Feb 2011-Out of Senate Rules Committee. 23 Feb 2011- Given "Do Pass Amended" recommendation in Senate Committee of the Whole. 1 Mar 2011- Passed by Senate 29-0-1 not voting and transmitted to the House. 8 Mar 2011- First Read in House and assigned to the House Military Affairs and Public Safety Committee and House Rules Committee. 23 Mar 2011- Given "Do Pass" recommendation in House Military Affairs and Public Safety Committee 5-0-4 absent. 18 April 2011- Passed House 58-0-2 not voting and returned to the Senate. 19 April 2011-Transmitted to Governor.

ADDENDUM #3 – MOAA STORMING THE HILL FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 14, 2011

Alexandria, Va. — More than 150 members of the [Military Officers Association of America](#) (MOAA) met in Washington, D.C. to participate in MOAA's annual "Storming the Hill" campaign on Wednesday, April 13. Participants visited the office of nearly every senator and representative of their home state to discuss MOAA's key legislative priorities.

The Storming the Hill event began in 1996, and helps MOAA's Board of Directors, staff, and council and chapter presidents representing all 50 states personally discuss with their legislators the key issues affecting the uniformed services community. Attendees also are in town for the annual "MOAA Council Presidents' Week" meetings.

Topics addressed by MOAA Hill-stormers included the future of TRICARE fee increases; protecting troops against cuts to manpower and pay; and fixing remaining inequities for the disabled, widows, and recalled Reservists.